

Piazzolla 100 years – part 1

Introduction, a young talent!

Although the tango had been a way of life as well as an expressive form of music and dance for a number of years before his birth, the legendary Argentinean bandoneon master Astor Piazzolla took the romantic, dangerous, and sultry traditional tango, added a healthy mix of jazz and classical styles, infused his own ideas, and created the *nuevo tango*.

When Piazzolla was born in 1921 in Mar de Plata, Argentina, the tango was starting its meandering journey from bordellos and back streets to respectability all around the world. Nowhere was it more revered and worshiped than its birthplace, Buenos Aires.



Mar de Plata



young Astor

In 1929, when Astor is 8 years old, his father gives him his first bandoneon, a version of the accordion with buttons and a deeper sound, which he had bought at a pawn shop for 19 dollars. Astor studies the bandoneon for one year with Andrés DÁquila and he makes his first record, *Marionette Spagnol*

By the age of nine, Astor had mastered the bandoneon and began to perform in public. Early musical influences included jazz masters Cab Calloway and Duke Ellington, with a hearty infusion of Bach, Mozart, and Chopin. Many classical piano compositions were rearranged by a neighbor so the young musician could play them on the bandoneon.

At age 13, Piazzolla got his big break when Carlos Gardel, a famous Argentinean singer and actor, came to the United States to make a movie and records. Astor's father presented his son to the celebrity, and Gardel was so impressed by the boy's bandoneon talents that he invited him to accompany him on his current world tour. Because of his tender age, Astor was not allowed to go on the tour.